



MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 9825 • Vancouver, Washington • 98666
2000 Fort Vancouver Way • Vancouver, Washington • 98663
Mosquito Service Request Line (March 1– October 1) 360•397•8430

News Release

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Contact: Lou Dooley, Environmental Health Services, Clark County Health Department
(360) 397-8122; lou.dooley@clark.wa.gov

Mosquito District steps up West Nile virus surveillance, testing, and control

Vancouver, WA—Washington is one of two states in the lower 48 that in 2004 have not experienced positive findings of West Nile Virus (WNV) in mosquitoes, horses, birds, or humans. Recent bird and horse cases in northeast Oregon, however, prove that the disease continues to move closer to home. Recognizing this inevitable spread, the Clark County Mosquito Control District and the Clark County Health Department have stepped up WNV surveillance, testing, and control for the mosquitoes that transmit the disease. Recent activities include:

- Increased trapping and testing of mosquitoes, with staff trained to identify and assess trapping data and provide immediate bio-analysis for the presence of mosquito-borne disease viruses.
- More dead birds sent to the Washington State Health Department to test for presence of WNV; 29 sent in 2004, up from 5 sent in 2003.
- More effort spent on controlling known carriers of WNV, such as the *Culex* species of mosquitoes, which breed in stagnant water around homes (in cups, pans, birdbaths, yard features) and in storm drain catch basins under streets. In previous years, the Mosquito Control District has focused its treatment efforts on areas along rivers or areas subject to flooding to control the notoriously aggressive “floodwater” mosquito. Floodwater mosquitoes will still be controlled.
- Purchase of new equipment to improve efficiency in larvicide applications to catch basins. The number of treated catch basins has increased from about 4,300 in 2003 to more than 10,000 in 2004.
- Coordination of larvicide treatment with Clark County Public Works. District staff apply larvicides right after public works crews have cleaned storm drains. This allows larvicides to remain for a longer period of time. The larvicides used are bacteria that interfere with the larval reproduction cycle and affect only mosquitoes and black flies. The impact on humans, other animals, and the environment is negligible. If WNV becomes prevalent, adulticiding (fogging) with conventional pesticides may become necessary as a last resort.

Lou Dooley, Clark County Health Department’s Environmental Health Services Manager, said area residents have helped this year’s surveillance and control efforts by reporting dead birds and areas of stagnant water where mosquitoes breed. “Some bird species such as crows, jays, and magpies are especially susceptible to West Nile Virus, and their sudden death could indicate the presence of the virus,” said Dooley. “We encourage the public to report dead birds or areas of standing water by calling the mosquito hotline at (360) 397-8430.”

More information about WNV, including symptoms, prevention, and statewide response, can be found on the Washington Department of Health Web site. Visit www.doh.wa.gov and look in the site index, or link to <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html>.